

MICHAEL J. REDENBURG, ESQ. PC Michael Redenburg, Esq. (NY #MR4662) 11 Park Place, Suite 817 New York, NY 10007 Telephone: (212) 240-9465 Facsimile: (917) 591-1667	
---	--

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

Alicia Serrano,

Plaintiff,

v.

**City of New York, NYPD Officers John
and Jane Does 1 through 10, individually
and in their official capacities (the names
John and Jane Doe being fictitious, as the
true names are presently unknown).
Defendants.**

Complaint

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Civ. No.:15-CV- 743

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. Plaintiff brings this civil rights action against the City of New York and New York City Police Officers John Does 1 through 10, alleging that defendants violated her rights under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, the Fourth, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution by falsely arresting her, and for the John Doe's failure to intervene and prevent such conduct. Plaintiff seeks compensatory and punitive damages, attorney's fees and costs and such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This action is brought pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§1983 and 1988, and the Fourth, Fifth & Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. Jurisdiction is conferred upon this Court by 28 U.S.C. §1331 and §1343.

3. Venue is proper in the Eastern District of New York pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391 (b) and (c) because a substantial part of the events giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred in this District, Plaintiff resides in this District and because some or all of the defendants reside in this District.

DEMAND FOR A JURY TRIAL

4. Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 38, Plaintiff demands a trial by jury in this action.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff Alicia Serrano ("Plaintiff" or "Ms. Serrano") is a forty four (44) year old woman who resides in the County of Kings, City and State of New York.
6. The City of New York is a municipal corporation organized under the laws of the State of New York.
7. The individual defendants are members of the New York City Police Department ("NYPD") who were so employed on February 4, 2015. The Doe defendants were acting under color of state law and in their capacities as members of the NYPD at all relevant times. The Doe defendants are sued in their individual and official capacities.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

8. The Incident which is the subject of the instant Complaint took place at or about 11:25PM on February 4, 2015, and within a NYCHA property known as *The Coney Island Houses* located in Brooklyn, NY.
9. In the late evening of February 4, 2015, Plaintiff left her apartment located within *The Coney Island Houses*, and was on her way to the store to get milk and juice for her children for the next morning.

10. As she went on her way, she noticed four (4) plainclothes officers and they stopped her, asking her for her identification.
11. Plaintiff produced her Medicaid card as identification and the officers then explained that they would run a check to ensure she didn't have any warrants; and would let her go if the warrant check came back negative.
12. The warrant check run by the officers revealed that Plaintiff did not have any outstanding warrants.
13. Next, the officers asked Plaintiff for another form of identification.
14. Although Plaintiff explained that she could go back to her apartment within the housing development where she was stopped, and where she lived, to get another form of identification, the officers told her that it would not be necessary and she was free to leave.
15. Plaintiff then decided to return to her apartment to get her NYS Driver's License to carry on her person just to be safe.
16. When Plaintiff came back outside, the officers stopped her again and frisked her, searching her person.
17. Plaintiff was then arrested and charged with three (3) counts of trespassing for being present within the housing complex where she resides.
18. Plaintiff was taken to a PSA Precinct for processing where she spent approximately ten (10) hours.
19. Thereafter, Plaintiff was transported to Brooklyn Central Booking to await arraignment.
20. At arraignment, the criminal charges levied against Plaintiff were adjourned in contemplation of dismissal.

21. As a result of the foregoing, Plaintiff suffered an unlawful detention, loss of liberty, emotional distress, fear, anxiety, humiliation and degradation – all to her detriment.

FIRST CLAIM
Unlawful Search and Seizure

22. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

23. Defendants violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments because they stopped and searched Plaintiff without reasonable suspicion or probable cause to do so.

24. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, Plaintiff sustained the damages herein before alleged.

25. As a result of the foregoing, Plaintiff suffered an unlawful detention, loss of liberty, emotional distress, fear, anxiety, humiliation and degradation – all to her detriment.

SECOND CLAIM
False Arrest

26. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

27. Defendants violated the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments because they arrested Plaintiff without probable cause.

28. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, Plaintiff sustained the damages hereinbefore alleged.

THIRD CLAIM
Failure to Intervene

29. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

30. Those defendants that were present but did not actively participate in the aforementioned unlawful conduct observed such conduct; had an opportunity to prevent such conduct and had a duty to intervene and prevent such conduct- but consciously failed and refused to intervene.

31. Accordingly, the defendants who failed to intervene violated the Fourth, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.

32. As a direct and proximate result of this unlawful conduct, Plaintiff sustained the damages hereinbefore alleged.

FOURTH CLAIM
MONELL CLAIM

33. Plaintiff repeats and realleges each and every allegation as if fully set forth herein.

34. The City of New York is a “person” within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. §1983.

35. The acts complained of were carried out by the aforementioned defendants in their capacities as police officers and officials pursuant to customs, policies, usages, practices, procedures and rules of the City and NYPD, all under the supervision of ranking officers of the NYPD.

36. The City is liable for the damages suffered by Plaintiff as a result of the conduct of their employees, agents, servants, in that, after learning of their employees’ violation of Plaintiff’s constitutional rights, they failed to remedy the wrong; they have created a policy and/or custom under which unconstitutional practices occurred and allowed such policies or customs to continue, and they have been grossly negligent in managing subordinates who caused the unlawful condition or event.

37. The City has been alerted to the regular use of excessive force and false arrests by its police officers, but has nevertheless exhibited deliberate indifference to such excessive force and false arrests; that deliberate indifference caused the violation of Plaintiff's constitutional rights in this case.
38. The Incident that Plaintiff complains of is not an isolated incident. The City has been aware for some time, from lawsuits, notices of claim, complaints filed with the Civilian Complaint Review Board, and judicial rulings suppressing evidence and finding officers incredible as a matter of law, that a disturbing number of the City's police officers use excessive force, unlawfully search and seize citizens, bring charges against citizens with no legal basis, perjure themselves in charging instruments and testimony, and fail to intervene in and report the obvious illegal actions of their fellow officers. Nevertheless, the City has allowed policies and practices that allow the aforementioned to persist.
39. In addition, the well documented failures of the Civilian Complaint Review Board ("the CCRB"), a City agency, to substantiate obviously meritorious citizen complaints have gone uncorrected. The CCRB regularly finds complainants lack credibility based on the fact that such complainants have also brought lawsuits to remedy the wrongs they have experienced, a practice that often results in not substantiating the most serious charges brought to them. In addition, the CCRB virtually never initiates their own findings of false statements against officers who have made false statements to the CCRB in their own defense, nor do they initiate findings that officers have failed to report their fellow officers' misconduct; thus, officers have no real incentive to come forward, or to testify truthfully at the CCRB. The CCRB has no enforcement mechanisms once making a

finding against an officer; it can only make recommendations to the NYPD, once finding misconduct by an officer.

40. The NYPD, once receiving a substantiated complaint by the CCRB, fails to adequately discipline officers for misconduct. The NYPD Department Advocate, which is endowed with the responsibility of following-up on substantiated CCRB charges, is understaffed and under-utilized. Furthermore, in the extraordinarily rare event that the CCRB substantiates a complaint and the Department Advocate proves the case in an internal trial against an officer, the police commissioner still maintains the power to reduce the discipline against such an officer.
41. Further, the City has no procedure to notify individual officers or their supervisors of unfavorable judicial review of their conduct. Without this notification, improper search and seizure practices and incredible testimony go uncorrected. Additionally, according to a report of the New York City Bar Association issued in 2000, the City has isolated its law department from the discipline of police officers so that civil suits against police officers for actions taken in their capacity as police officers have no impact on the officers' careers, regardless of the outcome of the civil actions.
42. The City is aware that all of the aforementioned has resulted in violations of citizens' constitutional rights. Despite such notice, the City has failed to take corrective action. This failure and these policies caused the officers in the present case to violate Plaintiff's civil rights without fear of reprisal.
43. Plaintiff has been damaged as a result of the deliberate indifference of the City to the constitutional rights of the City's inhabitants.

44. As a result of the foregoing, Plaintiff suffered an unlawful detention, loss of liberty, emotional distress, fear, anxiety, humiliation and degradation – all to her detriment.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests judgment against defendants as follows:

- a. Compensatory damages against all defendants, jointly and severally;
- b. Punitive damages in an amount to be determined by a jury;
- c. Reasonable attorneys' fees and costs; and
- d. Such other relief as this Court shall deem just and proper.

Dated: February 12, 2015
New York, NY

s/Michael J. Redenburg
Michael J. Redenburg (NY #MR4662)
MICHAEL J. REDENBURG, ESQ. PC
11 Park Place, Suite 817
New York, NY 10007
mredenburg@mjrlaw-ny.com
1-212-240-9465 (Phone)
1-917-591-1667 (Fax)